The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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PERVADING INSPIRATION.

Lord, when we come at thy dear call,
Our scanty store we bring:
Sweet Spirit, thou dost ask our all
For thine own hallowing.

We need not ask of our right hand
Its cunning to forget:
May not it move at thy command?
Hast not thou tasks to set?

Why need we, Lord, our hearts deny?
Why bid our love begone?
The heavenly Dove comes down to try
His own sweet skill thereon.

Why should our minds repent their pains,
Unlearn their little lore?
Spirit of Truth, advance their gains:
Mingle thine own bright store.

Our tender tears we need not hide,
Our yearnings deep reprove:
Teach us a glorious grief allied
To thine, sin-vexed Dove!

We need not dread our golden while,
Nor shun each blissful bower:
Bright Presence, bless it with thy smile,
Make it thine own sweet hour!

For us no height, for us no deep,
Whereon thou mayst not shine:
O Spirit sweet, thou wouldst not keep
From us one gift divine.

—*T. H. Gill.*

FROM A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

What we ought to be grateful for the most are the universal blessings,—the good which God sends to all, and for the power of helping others to enjoy the same.

There is, for example, the thinking power in us all. How wonderful a thing is that! There is something in every soul, a diamond in its casket more precious than the treasures of kings. He who has the power of thought, and is willing to think, is more than a king. He has freedom, independence, power. His mind goes backward into history to the beginning of things, forward to the consummation. Rocks and plants have no secrets from him: the stars in their courses talk with him. He has for friends Socrates and Plato,—all the heroes and the sages of antiquity, all the wise men and women of our time. He may be poor, and unable to move from home and from daily toil; but in moments snatched from labors he travels to more purpose than the unthinking nobleman with his hired attendants. He may be in prison: his mind is free to come and go. For

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage."

The man who uses aright his thought-power is strong. It is a magician greater than Merlin. The thought of one man causes the sun to draw portraits, causes the lightning to run errands, makes fire to draw our carriages and labor in all our mills, splits or tunnels the mountains, and bridges oceans with steamships.

But there is a purer and deeper pleasure in thought than in these its more apparent triumphs. He who loves truth for its own sake, who thinks his own thoughts, and penetrates into events, persons, circumstances around him by the fidelity of his attention, who does not repeat by rote nor imitate his neighbor, but is willing to look at things with his own eyes, seems to come thus into immediate and living contact with nature, and, through nature, with God. Such a habit of mind—a habit which any one can form—gives the purest satisfaction and makes the dullest day full of sunlight.

Yet still more a cause of thanksgiving is the power of loving. He who loves dwells in God, and God in him. True love is of divers sorts, low and high, more or less pure, more or less turbid with passion, pride, and selfishness. But it is like a stream which, as it runs, deposits its earthy matter, enlarges its volume, deepens its current, and at last can bear on its bosom the products of the farm and the mine to the great cities which cluster at its mouth. The child's love is sweet, but not profound; the love of youth is passionate, but wayward and selfish; the love of the man and woman, of the father and mother, grows generous, deep, pure. We learn to prize our friends more, we value friendship at a higher rate; and at last we rise out of merely personal affections, and live somewhat in the love of all, in sympathy with all, in a hearty interest for those about us and near us. The more we escape from self, the deeper grows our inward contentment, the more we are all able to find happiness in that of others, the richer the supply in our own bosom. So love to man leads us up to the love of God, and the love of God leads us back to the love of man. But love, to be fully love, must not be in word only, nor in emotion only, but in deed and truth.

The power of *working* is the third great blessing given to men. The primal curse of labor, when rightly viewed, becomes a source of highest joy. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said Jesus. God knows no Sabbath. He rests not day nor night. His power is pouring forth perpetually to sustain and carry on his work of creation. Christ never rested while on earth, but found his happiness in doing good; and we cannot believe that he now rests from his work of redemption. As man ascends in the scale of being, he works more and more. The savage despises labor, and leaves it to the women to work, while he goes to hunt or to war. The uneducated man works only from necessity, and takes his pleasure in indolent repose. The child works only from compulsion, and takes his pleasure in play. But the man of genius, the man of learning, of culture, of virtue, works from the love of work, and in a short lifetime does the work of a hundred years. Raphael, the painter, in thirty-five years filled the world with hundreds of pictures, each of priceless value. The scholar labors from year to year till he has accomplished his task. "How many hours a day do you study?" asked a young American of a living German theologian. "Ah, me!" he replied: "*only eighteen!*" John Quincy Adams never gave himself rest, but at an extreme old age outdid in working all the young men about him. What joy, what happiness, in such work as this, such devoted industry, such untiring labor,—study pursued till extreme old age with the ardor of boyhood, duties fully performed in the spirit of him who said, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do"!—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

THE MOCKING-BIRD.

Written for *The Cheerful Letter.*

My mocking-bird, all through the summer hours
In silence listened to the wild bird's tone;
He heard the summer breezes woo the flowers,
The lapping water's song he made his own.

The birds have flown, half-naked stand the trees
The dead leaf hangs where roses used to bloom.
Yet every chant of bird and brook and breeze
My glad bird echoes 'mid the autumn gloom.

Dear bird, I would that I could learn of thee
To grace the dreary hours with memory songs,
To bear into the present's gloom with me
The light that to life's sunny past belongs.

For peace and pain are one in God's great love,
Only our restless hearts make song or moan.
Mine be the strength to sing, and, singing, prove
Eternal light and peace and praise my own.

EDITH WILLIS LINN.

Let any dispassionate person examine the liturgy of any one of the great Christian churches, or let him collect together what he may remember of the extempore prayers of dissenters, and he will, I venture to predict, be surprised to observe how marvellously the story of the lepers is verified every day, how for ten prayers there is but one thanksgiving. "We bless Thee for creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life." Some few short words like these at the end of whole litanies of minute petitions are thought sufficient to dismiss the million million benedictions which our Creator is forever pouring like sunbeams on our heads. Now, if it be right to *pray* for every sort of desirable object, for dry weather and for rain, for victory over our enemies, and for deliverance from lightning and tempest, plague, pestilence, and famine, battle, murder, and sudden death, surely it cannot be thought superfluous to *thank* God for similar blessings with at least equal assiduity. Yet for the sunshine and the moonlight, for summer's stores and winter's healthful snow, for the radiant earth and solemn sea, for fruits and flowers and brutes and birds, for our own wondrous frames of flesh, for sight and hearing, taste and smell and feeling, for sleep, for language, for human love, for intellect and memory, for all the wondrous powers which permit the child of yesterday to converse with the dead of all the ages, and to soar in thought through the realms of boundless space,—for *these* blessings what liturgy pours its long strains of thanksgiving before the throne of the merciful Benefactor?

What forms have been ever proposed for blessing God for the great discoveries of modern science and the progress of political freedom,—for our fire-horse, the steam-engine, whose fodder of coal was laid up so carefully a million years ago; for the facilitation of all kindly intercourse throughout the world; for medical and surgical discoveries without number for the relief of human suffering; for the unspeakable blessing of a righteous jurisprudence? Have we no thanks for things like these? Should the Benedicite of the "heir of all the ages" be no stave the longer than that of the serf and monk of the centuries when oppression and ignorance darkened Europe with their double night? Methinks that each generation of men ought to add a strophe, and that ours ought to add many a strophe, to the universal hymn of God's happy children.—*F. P. Cobbe.*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

THE BOOK OF ACTS, CHAPTER II.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Having given in our numbers for September and October the interesting passages from Farrar and Robertson in regard to the *day of Pentecost*, we will now make a brief review of the chapter passage by passage.

Verse 1. "And when the day of Pentecost was now come." "Pentecost" is the Greek name for the second of the three great Jewish festivals, derived from the word "Pentecostos," "fiftieth," being held on the fiftieth day after the passover Sabbath. It is called "the feast of the harvest; the first-fruits of thy labors." (Ex. xxiii. 16), also "the feast of weeks," being seven weeks after the passover. There was an offering at this festival of the first two loaves made from the first portion of the wheat harvest of the year, as a thank-offering.

"They were all together in one place." Not in the temple. So modern commentators agree. It was some private house.

"There came from heaven a sound as of a rushing mighty wind." The verb employed to express the "rushing wind" is used by Peter (2 Pet. 1; 17, 18) of the voice which came from heaven at the transfiguration.

"Tongues parting asunder, like as of fire." Not "cloven," as in the old version; "parting among them," or "distributing themselves." Note, R. V. not fire, but "like fire."

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." See Mark xvi. 17: "*new* tongues." For a full discussion of this, see the two previous lessons (September and October).

"There were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven." A hyperbolical expression, probably referring to those pious Jews who had

come for the feast. It cannot refer to Gentiles.

"When this sound was heard." Not, as in the old version, "it was noised abroad." On their way to the temple, perhaps, they heard this strange sound.

"The multitude came together." See the two previous lessons here. vv. 6–13.

"Galileans." Galileans were the illiterate country people as compared with the learned Jews of Jerusalem.

14. "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice."

These *first* speeches and preachings of the apostles are highly interesting, as they would necessarily include the essentials of Christianity. In this speech Peter announces the FACT of Christ's resurrection (vv. 24–32); the DOCTRINE, "Jesus is the Christ" (v. 36); the duties of the hearers: "Repent, and be baptized" (v. 38).

Peter is always the spokesman in the first section of the book of Acts.

14. "Ye men of Judea."

Peter has ceased to speak in tongues, and begun to preach (compare 1 Cor. iv. 1–4, etc.). He is addressing only the Jews.

15. "These are not drunken," etc. It was the "third hour,"—that is, about nine o'clock in the morning; and no pious Jew might eat or drink before this time, which was the first hour of prayer. Moreover, they might not take wine, except with meat; and the custom was to eat bread in the morning, meat in the evening (Cambridge Bible).

17, 18. See how *all* prophecy, instead of the few prophets of the Old Testament. The whole people is now filled with the spirit of God." The quotation is from the Septuagint, with variations.

Vv. 22–26. "Ye men of Israel." An appeal to the Jewish feeling of pride in the descent from Jacob.

"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God." The Cambridge Bible (strong orthodox and Trinitarian) here and in succeeding verses notices the emphasis on the simple manhood of Jesus.

23. "Wicked hands," as in old version is "lawless" hands; *i.e.*, hands of men without the law, the Roman soldiers.

Vv. 25–28. Quotation from Ps. xvi. Peter applies this to Jesus, showing that it could not apply to David, who did die like other men, and was buried. "Hell" should be "Hades"; that is, the underworld,—not a place of punishment, but abode of the shades of the living.

33. "The promise of the Holy Ghost"; that is, "the promised Holy Spirit."

37. "Pricked in their heart"; *i.e.*, stung with remorse. "What shall we do?" to escape the penalties which must fall on us, members of a nation which has committed so great a sin.

38. "Repent." See Luke xxiv. 47. "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name."

"Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." The Cambridge Bible notices that this is baptism simply in the name of Jesus. So everywhere in the book of Acts.

39. "All that are afar off." Very interesting, including Gentiles as well as Jews in the promises. Peter was here candid and courageous, although he relapsed afterward.

40. "With many other words." Only the kernel has been given.

"Untoward generation." "Untoward" should be "perverted" or "crooked."

41. "Three thousand souls." A wonderful beginning. There were a hundred and twenty before.

42. "They continued steadfastly." They were real converts, earnest and faithful, not carried away for the moment.

"Breaking of bread." Communion without wine, like the feast by the shore of Galilee. Schmidt and Holtzendorf think this denotes social meals, when the Lord's Supper was taken, called Agapai, or "love-feasts."

43. "Fear came upon every soul." Alford thinks this means on those who were not Christians, and were alarmed at the growth of this new sect.

44. "All that believed," as contrasted with outsiders in v. 43.

45–47. A beautiful picture of the early infant church. "All things in common"; brotherly love; Christian communion. These happy days never last, but are exceedingly precious. So with the beginning of every new religious movement.

L. F. C.

"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."—*John xiv. 14.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.— Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

A four-pound package is the most that can be sent by *mail*. The postage on four pounds of *magazines* is 16 cts., on four pounds of *books* 32 cts.

Postage on magazines and all periodicals (weighing less than four pounds), 1 cent for four ounces; on bound books, 1 cent for two ounces. *Paper* books are now sent by mail at the same rate as magazines, *when issued periodically*.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the First Church Alliance of Salem. Address Miss Alice D. Perkins, 5 Oliver Street, Salem, Mass.

Monroe's "Primer"; "New Primer"; "Third Reader" and "Fourth Reader"; Lippincott's "Third Reader"; "Fourth Reader" and "Fifth Reader"; Franklin "Fourth Reader" and "Third Reader"; Hillard's "Primer"; "Modern First Reader"; "Modern Second Reader"; "Modern Third Reader"; "Elementary Lessons in English," Whitney; "Primary Language Lessons," Powell; Swinton's "New Language Lessons"; Meservey's "Bookkeeping, Single and Double Entry"; Hagar's "Common School Arithmetic"; Robinson's "Complete Arithmetic"; "First Book in Arithmetic"; Greenleaf's "Brief Course in Arithmetic" and "Complete Arithmetic"; White's "Complete Arithmetic"; MacVicar's "Complete Arithmetic"; Bradbury's Eaton's "Arithmetic"; Guyot's "Intermediate Geography"; Swinton's "Introductory Geography"; Warren's "Primary Geography"; "First Lessons in Geography," Hall; Appleton's "Elementary Geography"; Perry's "Bible Manual"; "Primer of Politeness"; "Problems in Geometry," Spencer; "First Music Reader"; "Second Music Reader"; "Gospel Hymns," No. 2.

Children's Books.

"Little Folks"; "Keepsakes for the Young"; "My Pet's Picture Book"; "My Darling's Album"; the *Nursery* for 1876, 1877, 1878, and 1879; the *Children's Hour* for 1872 and 1876; the *Infant's Magazine* for 1875 and 1873; Sherman's "Elementary Algebra"; "Manual of Inorganic Chemistry"; "Common School Algebra"; Otto's "French Grammar," Bôcher's; "Class-book of Etymology," Lynd; "Latin Exercises," Whiton; "Practical Arithmetic," Leach and Swan; "German Grammar," Whitney; "Elementary Geography," Potter.

Miss Susan Nichols, 14 Lincoln Street, New Haven, Connecticut, offers "Tales and Traditions of Switzerland," by William Westall; "In Realms of Gold" (poems), by James B. Kenyon; and "A Fool's Errand."

Miss M. D. Fette, 11 Walnut Street, Boston, Mass., offers the Boston Saturday *Transcript*, to be sent each week after reading.

Mrs. Cora A. Hoskinson Sturgis, Michigan, offers *Century*, 1889, and *Peterson*, 1893, to any one paying postage.

Mrs. S. Frances Wood, 81 Cottage Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island, offers the "Spiritual Athlete, and how he trains," by W. A. Bodell, A.B. This book is suitable for young men, or boys growing into manhood.

REQUESTS.

Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from: —

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Mrs. L. E. Abbott Holt, Morganton, North Carolina (whose letter was published in September *Cheerful Letter*), asks for the following books, which will be the means of doing much good: "Composition and Rhetoric," Hart; "Outlines of the World's History," Swinton; "History of England," Anderson; "Theory of Physics," Ames; "Elementary Physics," Stuart; "School Algebra"; Lamb's "Tales from Shakspere"; *Century*, Nov. 18, 1891, to Nov. 18, 1892; "Elementary Geometry"; a book on "Civil Government"; "History of Rome."

Mr. L. D. Boise, Hinsdale, Mass., would like to receive the *New World*, the *Arena*, and the first volume of Channing's "Works."

Youth's Companion is asked for by Miss Mary J. Fansler, Cabool, Missouri.

Mrs. Harriet M. Redding, H. M. H. Episcopal Hospital, Front and Lehigh Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, asks for *New England Magazine*.

Mrs. Mary A. McGehee, Vulcan, Orange County, Virginia, will be thankful for any reading.

Any book suitable to read at a "mothers' meeting" will be thankfully received by Mrs. Cicely A. Claude, Chevy Chase Lake, Maryland.

(Has Mrs. Claude "Gentle Measures"? If so, we recommend *Babyhood*, for physical welfare of young children, as "Gentle Measures" is for their moral welfare.)

Mrs. A. C. Earle, Marengo, Ohio, a crippled shut-in, asks for "Cricket on the Hearth," "Lady of the Lake," Whittier's "Poems," old or current numbers of *Munsey*. She has very little reading, and would be grateful for any.

Mrs. A. F. Edwards, Pleasant Valley, El Dorado, California, asks for Wood's "Natural History" and Andersen's "Fairy Tales."

Mrs. Lou J. Wilson, Hardy, Texas, thanks all who have so kindly remembered her with letters and reading, and asks for McGuffey's "Revised Second and Third Readers."

Mrs. S. J. Christy, Balsam, North Carolina, living eight miles from town, three miles from church, and not able to buy reading, will be very grateful for any sent her.

Florence Criste, Madisonville, Ohio, would be grateful for Darwin's "Descent of Man," Spencer "On Education," and current numbers of *Modern Priscilla*.

I have long wanted to send a brief account of my coming into the Cheerful Letter Exchange, and express my gratitude for the blessing it has been to me. From the first kind letter received in response to my inquiries concerning *The Cheerful Letter* up to the present time, an influence of love and sympathy has been felt continually. I joined the Cheerful Letter Exchange when I was in such wretched health. I have received many beautiful letters from members, and I realize more and more fully the blessedness of sympathy. But my health is better now, and I sincerely hope may con-

tinue so. I now call myself comparatively well, and am able to enter into many active duties, for which I am deeply thankful. Nothing has ever touched our hearts as this kind and loving sympathy shown me and mine. Words of mine would fail to express my gratitude for this remembrance. Now I am fond of letters, and they seem to me like human lives full of sweetness and love. With constant thought and loving interest, I am, sincerely, M. E. Oades, 802 Central Avenue, Olympia, Wash.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[*All articles for this department should be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.*]

One of the loveliest things (and the adjective is used in its fullest, deepest sense) in kindergarten teaching is the constantly recurring lesson of kindness to all living things. The true kindergartner teaches, besides truthfulness, courtesy, thoughtfulness, generosity, and respect for the rights of others, the kindred lesson of reverence for life,—not human life alone, but for that of bird and bee and flower.

"The dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all,"

should be painted in clear and beautiful letters upon the wall of every room where little children are taught, for it is one of the most ennobling lessons that they can learn; and it is greatly needed to offset some teachings of the street, and, unfortunately, too often of the home.

It would be unjust to charge mothers and nurses with deliberately teaching disregard for life, callousness to suffering, or positive cruelty. But many of them repeat over and over again to the little ones nursery rhymes that are not only crude and worthless, but in many cases decidedly evil in their influence.

The time has passed when parents endeavored to terrify their children into "being good." Happily, the thought of God as a loving Father, quick to forgive the penitent, is now more widely taught than that of an angry judge, waiting to punish baby peccadilloes with an almost eager severity. But such teaching was given conscientiously by those who believed the child to be prone to evil as the sparks fly upward.

There has always been some good nursery literature, little stories and songs that told of heroism, of gentleness and kindness, though in many cases they seem to have been quite overlooked. And in the last twenty or thirty years the standard has been greatly elevated, and the most gifted writers have given of their best for the delight and instruction of little children.

Yet how many there are who seem to know of nothing but the old nursery rhymes, and recite them again and again! Bad grammar, faulty rhymes, jerky rhythm, suggestions of cruelty, theft, and greediness,—all are ignored for the sake of the amusing jingle of the lines. The maid has her nose nipped off by the blackbird; and the cruel carving-knife descends upon the tails of blind mice. The rope hangs the butcher, and the butcher kills the ox. Even Jack and Jill, as they hasten on their errand of helpfulness, are made to fall and crack their dear little crowns. These disasters are not intended to develop the sympathy and tenderness of our little ones, but to amuse them, to make them laugh, to prove that brutality and suffering and death are fit subjects for a jest.

Then, too, there is a great deal about thievery in the old jingles. Tom, the piper's son, runs off with a stolen pig; Taffy, the Welshman, breaks into his neighbor's house, and carries away a marrowbone; and the knave of hearts robs her gracious Majesty of the tarts made by her own royal hands.

Here are theft and gluttony together; but nowhere do we find these faults punished except in the case of Tom, the piper's son. He was "beat"; but the pig was "eat" by partakers who were worse than the thief.

All these suggestions are morally pestiferous; and the mother who imprints them on the mind of her little lad may soon find herself obliged to try the curative powers of prayer and tears and punishment, when he makes a raid on her plum cake or filches a dime from her pocket-book.

And the stories of the ghosts and goblins,—can they not be suppressed forever?

"Here comes a candle to light you to bed,
And here comes a chopper to chop off your head."

What timid little creature likes to be left alone in a dark room with such words as

these ringing in its ears? It is probable that, more often than we can know, the nervous system is injured by some of the horrible stories told to children, and serious results follow, although these may not always be traced to their source.

It is well known that children often suffer mental agonies from some cause that could be removed by a little explanation and discussion, but of which, from a curious and unfortunate reticence, they hesitate to speak. Often they are told distressing stories, or mysterious threats are made by some injudicious person in charge of them; and the little mind is burdened with vague terrors that, almost forgotten by day, return with overwhelming force at night, when the child is left in loneliness and silence and darkness. From these may be evolved the frightful dream from which the child awakes, shivering and crying, and with heart wildly beating, to be comforted only by the cheering influence of light, a soothing presence, and the caress of affection. The stories that are told to children, especially bed-time stories, should be selected with a view to cheerfulness; and pictures should not be shown that are startling or depressing. Frightful and frequently recurring dreams have been caused by pictures in very excellent books,—pictures that make little impression on the mind that comprehends them, but that print themselves deeply on a child's mind.

Many a child has grown more and more timid, fretful, and irritable, with an overwrought imagination and shattered nerves, in the years when it should be most happy and care-free, because of the thoughtlessness, or ignorance, or positive malice of those to whom the dear little life has been intrusted. The cruelty of those who so harass the heart and brain of a child can hardly receive too severe condemnation.

Let us contrast the horrors of the old rhymes and stories, and their possible evil effects, with the beautiful teachings of the children's songs of to-day, especially those used in the kindergarten, where the sentiment of the rhymes is carried out in action. Here the little dove who brings a message receives literally "a kind word and a kiss"; the "baby squirrels dear," after the merry chase and capture, must not be kept prisoners, but, an imaginary nut being given them, they "gayly scamper back." If the bird prefers its nest in the tree to a home in the cage, its choice is allowed it: even the relative rights of cats and mice are held to be worthy of respect. The cunning mouse scampers off, but puss must be provided with an acceptable dinner.

Everything has a right to enjoy, in its own way, the life God gave it; and it is not to be molested or injured. The tenderness that beams from a child's face as it caresses its playmate who for the moment represents a dove or squirrel is not assumed, it is real; and the influence of it is for good. A fleeting influence, you think? Possibly, but it is in the power of parents and teachers to deepen the impression and make it permanent. Aside from other lessons taught, the value of which is not yet understood, this of mercy and loving kindness, and reverence for life in all its forms, is one that is greatly needed; and the time to teach it is the earliest moment when the expanding mind is able to receive it.

Shall we not make these refined and charming songs the "songs of home," and let the worn-out, worse than foolish jingles be forgotten?—*Selected.*

A LETTER.

I always read the articles in *The Cheerful Letter* under the heading "The Mothers' Council," and I think that perhaps it is time for me to write one. The last selection * struck me as likely to be misleading in some respects. I suppose that there are all sorts of mothers and all sorts of experiences; but is the great danger that children, at the present time, will be too obedient?

The writer says that "there are two sorts of obedience,—deference, or the desire to please" (she seems to think these are equivalent terms), "and servility, or fear of pain."

But is "deference" the same thing as the desire to please? And is "servility" the fear of pain? Moreover, is either of them the same thing as obedience? Perhaps the writer means that these may be the *sources* of obedience. I think that she has by no means covered the ground in saying this.

The next sentence is rather mistily ex-

* In September number.

pressed; but, if I may presume to think I understand it, it is "the *free* surrender of any portion of the child's individuality" that is commended. Does this mean that it should be at the option of the child whether to obey or not?

"Should so lovely a thing be sacrificed to harsh egotism?" the writer pathetically inquires. A most needless question. Everyone would say that "harsh egotism" is always to be blamed, or even egotism without the harshness. The real point at issue is whether a child is happier and better for being trained in habits of strict obedience or for being allowed at the mature age of three or four to decide for himself whether obedience is an advantage or not?

Those of us who read Jacob Abbott can recall how clearly he has shown that it is by "gentle measures" that the most perfect obedience is taught, and that the mothers whose children habitually disobey may be the very ones who are harsh, fretful, and impatient, and receive neither obedience nor affection from their children, while those children who are firmly governed are happier, more loving, and can even be allowed more real freedom.

There is a sad (and true) story of a child who was badly burned by playing too near an open fire, while her little playmates escaped because their mother had *forbidden* them ever to step upon the hearth-rug; and, trained to strict obedience by a wise mother, they were perfectly safe out of her sight.

Why is there any more "humiliation" in a child of three or four rendering obedience to a loving mother than in a full-grown man obeying his superior officer? In many departments of life, workers are valuable in proportion as they have the faculty of strict obedience to orders; and the more experienced they are, the more character and knowledge of life they have, the more readily and cheerfully is this obedience rendered.

Much might be said on this point, but we will notice only one more maxim in the article, which seems to hold a mistaken idea:

"At first, only such impulses as tend to his own injury should be thwarted."

Is not the first lesson—or at least a very early one—to respect the rights of others? Is it wise to instil the idea that the child's own welfare is the only thing of importance? Whence comes the rude and selfish boy of eight or ten, except from the child of two, whose selfish impulses were not thwarted until they had become too strong to deal with; and the mother, in helpless and disgraceful weakness, allowed him to become a general nuisance, with the vague hope that "some time or other he would outgrow it."

I wish we might have some anecdotes of real experiences instead of generalizations. These are always helpful, and so are authentic observations. If every one who can would contribute an anecdote of a real mother and a real child, we should have a good deal of food for reflection.

One who believes that the child trained to obedience is both freer and happier.

NATURAL HISTORY.

SEA SNAILS.

For simplicity's sake we will use the term "sea snails" for all those marine mollusks which have the shell in one piece, and which the learned call Univalves or Gasteropods. The shell is usually more or less coiled, an exception to this rule being the "limpet" or "tent-shell."

Limpets, abalone shells, and similar mollusks, which cling firmly to the rocks they live on, need no other protection; but most sea snails have a horny or limy plate or "operculum," with which the mouth of the shell can be closed after the head and creeping foot are drawn in. As this snail door is attached to the foot, and not to the shell, when the animal dies, the empty shells and operculum plates are washed in separately, with no indication of their having belonged together. Some snails have an operculum of great beauty, richly colored and polished like a gem. "Eyestones" are the opercula of a species of small sea snail. When the animal is walking, the operculum lies on top of the long, gliding foot.

Hold a sea snail in front of you, with the spire erect, and note that the opening, or "aperture," is toward your right hand. Have you any shells where it is at the left?

Mollusks, whether of the snail-form or the clam-form (univalve or bivalve), never cast off their shells and grow new ones,

after the method of crabs and lobsters. The shell itself grows from a pin-head size until it attains the full size and weight of the adult. There is a delicate membrane called "the mantle," which lines the shell, and deposits a layer of limy matter over the inner surface, and especially around the borders of the opening, or "aperture." One can often trace lines of growth on the shell, and find by them what its shape must have been when it was first born. But the young cowry is shaped like an "olive" shell, with a short spire, which spire becomes covered with shell growth, and is wholly concealed in the adult cowry.

Some snail shells have a small hole close to the aperture, which hole is called the "umbilicus." *Natica heros*, which is the largest shore univalve (sea snail) of Northern New England, has a decided umbilicus, while south of Cape Cod, *Natica duplicata*, which looks almost exactly like it, can be distinguished by a callous of limy matter covering and concealing the umbilicus When I first found these two shells, I thought they were the same species.

Natica heros ought to be a vegetable feeder, because it has an aperture where the border is continuous all round,—that is, is not interrupted by any notch or groove or spout,—and the animals that live in such shells are supposed to be herbivorous, and those that inhabit notched shells to be carnivorous; but there are many exceptions to this rule, and the "heroic natica" is one. It eats clams and other bivalve mollusks, scraping a hole in their shells with its lingual ribbon. This sort of tongue is common to most snails. It is rougher than a pussy-cat's, being thickly set with silicious or flinty teeth; and, being long and narrow, it resembles a flexible file in its action.

The way in which a "Drill" perforates an oyster is thus described. It first, by means of its strong muscular foot, attaches itself firmly to the upper valve of the oyster, and then, curving its dental ribbon, it brings a point on the convex side, where the teeth are set perpendicularly, to bear on one point of the oyster shell, and rotates its ribbon back and forth, back and forth, through nearly a whole circle each time, until by long labor it has completed a perforation, and can insert its siphon, or sucking tube, and draw out the oyster substance. "To understand this movement, crook your forefinger, and, inserting the knuckle in the palm of the opposite hand, give to it, by the action of the wrist, the sort of rotation described."

One often finds shells of all sorts, each perforated by a small round hole made in this way by some boring mollusk.

Eggs of sea snails are sometimes encased in parchment-like bags or capsules. Those of the Whelk are heaped together in an irregular mound, and those of the Conch are attached to a parchment-like string one or two feet long. The strings of Conch-eggs are called "Sea-necklaces." Each capsules contains thirty or so eggs; and each little conch, when mature, escapes through a round hole in the edge of the saucer-like capsule. They say that the Conch has no rasp-like tongue, so that, when he wishes an oyster for his dinner, he crushes and breaks the shell with his strong muscular foot, and then eats the contents.

On the outside of the shells of the Conch, *Natica heros*, and other large sea snails (also on pebbles and muscles) one often finds the curious shells of the "Slipper-limpet," "Deck-head," or "Boat-shell." On the inside of such shells, especially if the mollusk is dead, and the shell inhabited by a Hermit Crab, one may find the other species of Slipper-limpet, the flat Slipper-limpet, the shell of which is always white, and curiously bent back, to fit the curve of the larger shell.

I have put up some small boxes of shells to illustrate this article, which shells I offer to send, postpaid, to those who would like them, and have been sufficiently interested in the subject to read the article through.

CORA H. CLARKE.

Jamaica Plain, Mass.

The address of Mrs. E. M. Backus is changed from Saluda, North Carolina, to Kershaw, Kershaw County, South Carolina.

The address of Mrs. Mary D. Anderson is changed from Calahan, North Carolina, to Ephesus, North Carolina.

I have several illustrated catalogues which may be acceptable to children or young people interested in collecting pictures for scrap-books, or portraits of modern authors. Address Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.*]

ANAGRAM.

Het logden dor si wolley ;
Het norc si guntrin wronb ;
Het seret ni plape shadcror
Hiwt rutif ear bigdenn wond.

Het stageinn bustle singfer
Ear clingur ni het uns ;
Ni study dops het welkmide
Sit hinded lisk sha nups.

ALPHABETICAL PUZZLES.

1.

The following words are names of cities or States in the western hemisphere. In each word the same vowel is repeated. Example, Oporto.

1. 3 consonants, and vowel repeated 3 times.
2. 4 consonants, and vowel repeated 3 times.
3. 7 consonants, and vowel repeated 4 times.
4. 6 consonants, and vowel repeated 3 times.
5. 3 consonants, and vowel repeated 4 times.
6. 5 consonants, and vowel repeated 3 times.
7. 5 consonants, and vowel repeated 3 times.

2.

The four asterisks of the left slant mean harness ; the next, a farming implement ; the next, a lake in the United States ; the next, a noted garden. The large asterisks will then form the name of a color.

BEHEADINGS.

1. Behead where people go when they go to Europe, and leave far from narrow : behead again, and leave a thoroughfare.
2. Behead to clip, and leave to listen : behead again, and leave what we do it with.
3. Behead what are found in Vassar Co llege, and leave what they are composed of.
4. Behead games, and leave a kind of wine.
5. Behead to seize, and leave to grate : behead again, and leave a reptile.
6. Behead a part of a tree, and leave a place for herding cattle.
7. Behead to turn around, and leave an important article used in sewing : behead again, and leave a preposition.

Answers to puzzles in October number :—

NUMBER 1.

The human body. Eyelids, knee-caps, drums, feet, nails, soles, muscles, palms, tulips, hips, calves, hairs, heart, lashes, arms, veins, insteps, eyes and nose, pupils, tendons, temples, crown, brow, palate, chords, tourists, neck, gum, tongue, scull, bridge.

NUMBER 2.

Balaam's ass.

NUMBER 3.

Cod.

BIBLICAL ENIGMA.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving fervour rather than silver and gold.

REMEDIAL FOODS.

Celery is invaluable as a food for those suffering from any form of rheumatism, for diseases of the nerves, and for nervous dyspepsia.

Peanuts, for indigestion. They are especially recommended for corpulent diabetes. Peanuts are made into a wholesome and nutritious soup, are browned and used as coffee, are eaten as a relish simply baked, or are prepared and served as salted almonds.

Onions are almost the best nervine known. No medicine is so useful in cases of nervous prostration, and there is nothing else that will so quickly relieve and tone up a worn-out system. Onions are useful in all cases of coughs, colds, and influenza, in consumption, insomnia, hydrophobia, scurvy, gravel, and kindred liver complaints. Eaten every other day, they soon have a clearing and whitening effect on the complexion.—*Housekeeper*.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

The address of our Treasurer after Oct. 15 will be Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass.; but subscriptions may be left for her at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at any time.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on the first Friday in December at 10.30 A.M. at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. All interested in this work are cordially invited to be present.

Our Book Club department has grown so large that we shall ask of all who in the future write to us for books to send the name of some minister as a reference,—when possible, the minister of the church to which they belong.

We fear that some of our subscribers have the impression that by subscribing for *The Cheerful Letter* they will be sure to receive books. The Book Club has proved an attractive department of our paper; and many of our subscribers are interested in sending books to those who are unable otherwise to obtain them. But we engage only to keep the Book Club open for offers and requests, and that under certain conditions.

We remind all who send parcels or boxes with books, papers, etc., to correspondents or to libraries, that it is absolutely necessary to write at the same time to the receiver, enclosing the receipt which shows that the express or freight charges on the package have been paid. For want of this precaution, valuable packages have never been received. It is not probable that any of our *Cheerful Letter* friends send packages without prepaying them, but it is a common mistake of the express agents to charge the receiver for a prepaid package.

N.B.—PLEASE READ DIRECTIONS AT BEGINNING OF BOOK CLUB BEFORE WRITING FOR BOOKS.

Subscribers to *The Cheerful Letter* are kindly requested to send subscriptions to the *Treasurer*, not to the Editor.

In sending requests or offers of books, it is essential to address these communications to the *Book Club* (Secretary Mrs. W. B. Nichols). If addressed to the Editor these letters are in some cases postponed; in others altogether omitted. See directions in every number of *The Cheerful Letter*.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE: —

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER,"—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Louise Howe, Nahant, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Nichols; and to Miss Clarke only articles for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.